Is your cube becoming a cage? 6 tips to put the 'human' back in HR

Many HR pros feel they're too swamped with day-to-day work to consider increasing their visibility among employees. But getting out on the shop floor or into the breakroom could counter employee attitudes that link HR only with bad news and being disconnected from employees. Here are six tips to help raise HR's visibility:

1. Tweak HR open-door schedules to accommodate employees whose hours fall outside of the typical 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. workday.

2. Eat in the company breakroom or lunchroom. Don't preach about HR, just ask how work is going and address any questions or concerns. Have a tablet or laptop handy to show where to find online HR info.

3. Meet periodically with employees by department. Use some meetings as forums to address their questions and concerns. Dedicate other meetings to specific topics, such as benefits or hiring.

4. Meet regularly with department managers. Ask questions such as: Do you need help with any HR-related issues? How are your new hires working out? Does the performance management system actually improve employee performance?

5. Cross-train HR staff. Capitalize on the versatility of your small HR department. When staff wear many hats, they can meet with employees about a wide variety of topics.

6. Participate in employee activities. Be there for functions, such as after-work gatherings, birthday lunches and employee recognition events.

Online resource Is your lack of connection a sign of burnout? Find a 25-question quiz to see if it's the blues or full-blown job burnout at www.theHRSpecialist.com/burnout.